

**THE BOARD OF NURSE REGISTRATION AND NURSING EDUCATION
ANNUAL REPORT
CALENDAR YEAR 2005**

**PREPARED FOR:
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Executive Summary

The Board of Nurse Registration and Nursing Education (BON) is required per the Nurse Practice Act (5-34-7) to submit an annual report on its activities to the Director of Health. The mission of the BON as mandated by legislature is to “safeguard life, health, property, and the public welfare of the people of this state and, in order to protect the people of the state from the unauthorized, unqualified, and improper application of services by individuals in the practice of nursing”. The statutory powers conferred to the Board of Nurse Registration and Nursing Education are: adopt, review or revise rules and regulations consistent with the law, approve nursing education programs, require standards for nursing practice, approve the examinations for licensure, establish requirements to validate competence for reinstatement, conduct hearings upon charges calling for a discipline, determine qualifications necessary for prescriptive privileges for certified registered nurse practitioners, grant certified registered nurse practitioners prescriptive privilege, determine qualifications necessary for prescriptive privileges for psychiatric and mental health clinical nurse specialist and grant prescriptive privileges.

Enclosed is the summary of the Board of Nurse Registration and Nursing Education activities for calendar year 2005, as well as a summary of the licensing, discipline and National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) Statistics from calendar years 1995 through 2005. This annual report represents a first of its kind in trending licensing, discipline and NCLEX data for the ten-year period for which these statistics are available.

Charles Alexandre, MS, RN then Director of the Board of Nurse Registration and Nursing Education has provided BON statistics from 1999 through 2003. For most of calendar year 2004 the BON was in search of a candidate for the Director’s position. For this reason, much of the discipline, licensing statistics and other important administrative functions were lost and resulted in the inability to maintain data on the majority of the BON activities. In addition to staff transition, the Department of Health’s (HEALTH) licensure data platform provides a summary count as opposed to point in time statistics rendering the inability to duplicate many of the statistical categories for calendar year 2004. Also, HEALTH’s licensure platform provides discipline data only and is limited in its ability to provide other essential data elements included in this report, such as No Unprofessional Conduct, Administrative Closure cases, Average Duration of Investigation, Relief from Probation, Non Disciplinary Alternative Program and the NCLEX Statistics. As such, all of the above data elements are manually maintained which increases the administrative burdens for the two person Board staff.

During my tenure as Director, in calendar year 2005 the BON opened 145 cases, with 91 (63%) cases closed as of 12/ 31/ 2005. Of the 91 cases closed, 30 (32%) were Unprofessional Conduct, while 24 (26%) and 31(34%)were No Unprofessional Conduct and No Unprofessional Conduct with a Letter of Concern respectively. As of December 31, 2005, 45 cases remain pending. In comparison for calendar years 1999 through 2003 of which data are available, an average of 121 cases were open and on average 114 (93%) cases closed. For the same calendar years, 1999 through 2003 an average of 569 cases

were closed. Of those closed cases, an average of 183 (32%) were Unprofessional Conduct. An average of 184 (32%) cases were No Unprofessional Conduct, as well as an average of 141 (25%) cases were No Unprofessional Conduct with Letter of Concern respectively.

The BON issued 313 Rhode Island licenses for Registered Nurses by Examination for calendar year 2005. The issuance of new licenses determines the qualifications and competency of nurses to practice. As of 1995, the last available year data was recorded, 466 RN by Examination licenses were issued. This represents a startling 67% decrease in RN by Examination licenses. In comparison for calendar years 1995 through 2004, an average of 372 Rhode Island Licenses by Examination for Registered Nurses were issued. Concomitantly, in 1995 the BON issued 343 RN by Endorsement licenses and ten years later, in calendar year 2005 issued 800 licenses for RN by Endorsement; approximately a 2.5 % increase.

The number of active Registered Nurse licenses issued in 1999 was 17223 for the last available year data was recorded. In 2005, the numbers of Registered Nurses with active licenses increase by 1 % to 17623. For the years 1999 through 2003, the BON has maintained an average 17645 active registered nurse licenses. The slight increase in active registered nurse licenses, as well as the significant increase in registered nurse licenses by endorsement implies the state's healthcare delivery system is increasingly relying on nurses who are licensed in other jurisdictions. The increase in applications by endorsement increases the administrative responsibilities to process those applications. The increased administrative burden further strain the limited resources afforded to the Board of Nursing.

Licensed Practical Nurse applications by examination were 44 in 1995 and increased to 67 in 2005. Licensed Practical Nurse applications by endorsement were 39 and 63 for years 1995 and 2005 respectively. The total RN's and LPN's licensed in 1995 were 892 both by examination and endorsement. In comparison for 2005, 1243 licenses were issued for the same categories.

Calendar Year 2005

- Jean Marie Rocha, MPH, RN appointed to the Director of Nurse Registration and Nursing Education in December 2004.
- Under the revised rules and regulations of the Nurse Practice Act, The Advance Practice Nurse Advisory Committee was formed. The committee now includes, Registered Nurse Practitioners, Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists and Psychiatric Clinical Nurse and Mental Health Specialist. Four meetings were held in calendar year 2005. The appointment of Patrick J. Sweeney, MD, PHD was appointed as physician member in February 2005.
- The BON developed and implemented a G-Tube policy in conjunction with the Board of Medical Licensure and Discipline in March 2005

- The Advance Practice Nurse Advisory Cmte recommended the scope of practice for a SANE (Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner). The BON approved the recommendations in April 2005.
- The BON reviewed the proposed school bill that would allow non-nursing staff to administer glucagon in cases of an emergency to schoolchildren. The BON voted unanimously with one abstention to not support the proposed bill in May 2005.
- Board member Sharon Smith, MSN, RN was elected president of the Board in July 2005, replacing Eve Sweeney, RN, MSN.
- Board member Eve Sweeney, RN, MSN participated on the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) Item Review Subcommittee for the 2005 NCLEX Examination.
- Board President, Sharon Smith and Director Jean Marie Rocha attended the annual National Council of State Boards of Nursing meeting in August. The two delegates from Rhode Island voted on working nursing and regulatory models. Such models considered are: Delegation: Working With Others, Nursing Assistant Regulatory Model and a Model Process for Criminal Background Checks. The concept papers can be found on the NCSBN website at <http://www.ncsbn.org/regulation/index.asp>
- The BON reviewed the process of untimely renewals and initiated an administrative policy that includes system automation of letters (a first of its kind) sent to late renewal applicants. This policy and procedure change became effective in September 2005.
- Board members Mary Dowd Struck, RN, Genevieve Rodrigues, LPN and Board staff, Jean Marie Rocha, RN participated in a discussion that was held with Rhode Island Hospital, Kent Hospital, Women & Infant's, and Pawtucket Memorial Hospital to review the LPN scope of practice in September 2005.
- Board Member Cristiana Rosa, RN, PCNS was appointed to the National Council of State Boards of Nursing Advance Nurse Advisory Panel.
- A round table discussion with the Directors of the five Nursing Programs, Hospital Association of Rhode Island and the Rhode Island State Nurses Association was held at the December 2005 BON meeting. The meeting was called to discuss strategies that may increase our schools nursing capacity, focusing on nursing education as it relates to the rules and regulations of the Nurse Practice Act.

It is important to note the role of the individual state Boards of Nursing as a member of the National Council of State Boards of Nursing. The NCSBN is a non-profit organization, whose membership is comprised of boards of nursing in the 50 states, District of Colombia, and the five U.S. territories. The NCSBN provides leadership and resources to the state boards of nursing to advance their regulatory excellence for public protection. Rhode Island's BON staff has not always had the opportunity to fully participate in the seminars, teleconferences, and ad hoc subcommittee meetings due to the competing daily administrative tasks the BON staff must do to keep licenses and discipline cases moving in a satisfactory manner to protect the public. The issues of nurse licensure compact, standards for criminal background checks and its applicability to the application decision-making process, and a review of the standards for nursing education

programs are all very relevant and extremely important public health issues that require the full participation from the Rhode Island Board of Nursing.

In closing, The Board of Nurse Registration and Nursing Education continues to meet its statutory obligation to safeguard the public in order to protect the people of this state from the unauthorized, unqualified and improper application of services by individuals in the practice of nursing. To that end, the volunteer members that comprise the BON who dedicate unending hours to the Board's mission to protect the public should be acknowledged for their dedication and collective experiences that strengthen the activities of the nursing board. Also, a special thank you to Sandra Clark, RN and Elizabeth James, RN who staff the complaint unit and provide the BON with timely and relevant information to proceed with the investigations. Maureen Slowik, the Licensing Data Unit Supervisor, who tirelessly assist the BON in licensing renewal activities. Michele Monroe, Licensing Aide, the only full time support staff assigned to the BON is exemplary in her duties day in and day out. Ms. Monroe single handedly processed 1456 licenses for calendar year 2005, while coordinating all the BON meetings as well as maintains the phone lines for the numerous calls that come into the BON on a daily basis. I would be remiss not to acknowledge Charles Alexandre, MS, RN, Chief of Health Professional Regulations, who provides continuous support and direction in my role as Director, Nurse Registration and Nursing Education.